

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE C-1

THE WASHINGTON POST
16 October 1977

Tibet Under Peking's Control

The Gulf Between the Rulers and the Ruled

By David S. Broder

LHASA, Tibet — The experience of Tibet is helpful for the first-time visitor to China; for Tibet is, in many respects, China scraped bare. The struggle for survival has been more arduous in this 2-mile-high plateau than in the Chinese hinterland, so the feat of the Communist rulers in making Tibet almost self-sufficient in food is all the more striking.

But because it was the last piece of the mainland to come under Peking's control, its final subjugation coming in 1959, a decade after the fall of the Kuomintang government, the methods by which communism has organized and controlled this society are less subtle and more obvious to the visitor.

And because there are also sharp racial, ethnic and religious differences between the Han Chinese and the Tibetan people, this is also a laboratory test of the Communists' ability to avoid the sins of cultural "imperialism."

In 3 days, a visitor on a closely escorted tour can gain no

more than a few clues to these three dimensions of the Tibetan experience. But because Tibet is so closed to American eyes — fewer than 20 Americans have visited this city in the last 28 years — even those clues may be worth recording.

ASGOOD A PLACE as any to begin is where our party — headed by George Bush, the former head of the U.S. Liaison Office in Peking — began its first full day in Lhasa. It is in the garden of the Norbu-Linka Palace, from which the 14th Dalai Lama, the last of the Buddhist god-kings who ruled Tibet for 5 centuries, fled in 1959, after the failure of a revolt against the Communists who had occupied Tibet 8 years earlier.

It is Oct. 1, National Day across China, marking the 28th anniversary of Mao Tse-tung's proclamation of the People's Republic of China. Our Tibetan hosts told us at the initial briefing that, "We will see some of the relics of the Tibetan past and join the masses to see how they celebrate National Day," in short, a meeting of the two cultures — Tibet past and Tibet present.

Broder, who writes on national politics for *The Post*, has been on a tour of Asia.

The "masses" are just beginning to stream into the park, when we arrive in our motorcade of sedans. We are ushered immediately into the palace. The briefing, delivered by a Chinese-speaking Tibetan and translated into English by one of the Foreign Ministry officials who has accompanied us from Peking, begins with a bit of history:

"After the peaceful liberation of Tibet [not so peaceful that it was not protested to the United Nations by the Dalai Lama in 1950-51] our party arrived at the policy of education and unity, rectifying the policies of the Dalai Lama. But the Tibetan ruling nobles under the 14th Dalai Lama, against the will of the people and the policy of the party, carried out rebellious activities in 1959. At that time, Norbu-Linka Park became the headquarters of the rebellion. After the quelling of the rebellion, Norbu-Linka Park came back into the hands of the people as a sightseeing and recreation place."

While there have been well-authenticated reports that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was making arms drops into Tibet at the time of the 1959 rebellion, our hosts make no reference to that fact — perhaps out of consideration for Bush, who headed the CIA for a year when he came home from China in 1975.

On the other hand, their statement that the ornate palace has come "back to the hands of the people" is open to question. None of the several thousand Tibetans ventures into — or near — the palace while we are wandering around the park, and Chinese cadre form a perimeter around the building while we are inside.

OUR TOUR of the palace is largely devoted to enjoyment of the rich fabrics and art works the Dalai Lama left behind. But certain display cabinets show documents going back to the 14th Century, linking Peking to the affairs of Tibet. There are letters which we are told show how Ming Dynasty emperors authorized and protected Tibetan religious customs. There is even a letter from the despised Chiang Kai-shek to the 14th Dalai Lama, recognizing his religious and temporal authority.

Over barley beer, our Tibetan guide tells us, through the double translation, that "all these historical relics show that officials of Tibet and the Dalai Lamas themselves, if they are to be legal, have to seek the approval of the central government or the emperor."

"Was approval ever denied?" one American asks. Pause for the double translation of question and answer. "No. They did not refuse it."